

18 Feb 70

Dear Harold:

I finally have a bit of time and can say a few words concerning Nichols. Not that I have much to say, or anything that might ease this situation.

Understand that in speaking of Nichols I have to speak on two levels: my personal experiences with him, and my knowledge of your experience. Each elicits a different response.

In my own contacts with N, I am disappointed only that he has not confided his work to me in the degree that I would like-- not because I am greedy for personal benefit, but because I think there are a lot of things I could help him with. I imagine that your attitude is pretty much the same.

I confided in him rather more than now seems warranted. I did this both because he had given me some help and encouragement, and because I knew that you too had confided in him. Regarding things that I sent him for use in his suit, I gave him carte blanche to use them in any way he and his lawyers deemed fair. He retraced some of what I had done, collected his own exhibits, and copyrighted in his name. In the course of all this he kept me fully informed about what he was doing, sent me copies of the exhibits, and the like, so I got no sense that he was doing anything underhanded. If at that point I ~~did~~ did not have the ability to stop him, neither did I have the desire.

Indeed, he went out of his way on one occasion to assure my control of something that he knew I wanted to control. When I was well into writing that article on the cartridge cases that we all thought would pan out into something very important, he sent me the necessary forms for copyrighting the thing in the States.

On occasions when I have asked for advice and opinions on medical matters that I did not fully understand, he gave it.

So, in terms of my own ~~xxxxxxx~~ dealings with him, I have no complaints. I can't say whether I won't have future complaints, but presently I have none.

His relationship with you, however, is bothersome in the extreme. Your own remarks to me in person and some things Gary said in past correspondence made me aware that N was potentially troublesome-- even possibly disastrous, so your recent correspondence regarding N does not surprise me-- but it does bother me. I think you are right in pressing N for an explanation of what is going on, and that you should press to the extreme if there seems no innocent motives behind his activities. I cannot fully understand the business of the Archives and the 399 base photo, but--superficially, at least-- it appears that this could be Archives' doing, and not Nichols'. In this matter I advise caution-- at least toward N, for it seems that he could hardly be responsible for where the Archives files its pictures. Surely Archives should know better than to make such errors, but I don't see how N can have anything to do with that. There is, too, the remote possibility that the error is deliberate-- to cause confusion and friction-- but I think it very unlikely. In any case,

on the matter of the 399 base photo, I would bear hard on Archives, but not on Nichols.

In other matters I see nothing wrong with what you are doing or with what you are~~y~~ proposing. I wish that~~b~~ there were some good advice that I could give so as to get this off your back, but I really have nothing to say that you have not thought of yourself.

I could, however, get in touch with Nichols myself and try to put some pressure to bear from this end-- friendly pressure, for as yet he has not treated me badly. I leave this up to you to decide. I don't want to contact him about your mutual friction unless I have your OK. I don't have any ~~xxx~~ idea yet what I would say, but perhaps there is some good that I can do. If it's all right for me to bring this matter up with Nichols, then tell me so. Otherwise, I'll stay out of ~~ix~~ direct involvement in it. I have not been in touch with N for some time, and have no definite prospect of writing to him soon about other matters. You let me know.

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Brener:

I have your long letter re Brener in response to my note. I regret that in the note I did not indicate how little implicit credence I give to what Sprague says. Often he believes what he wants to believe, so I treat cautiously whatever he says. I passed the note since you had indicated interest in Brener.

Thanks for the info in the note. I am not sure yet whether I'll feed some of it back to Sprague, for I am not sure it will do him any good. If I do contact him further, I'll not mention you as the source.

I ordered Brener's book, but have not yet received it.

Brinquier: I have not yet ordered this, and won't until I hear from you or others that it is out. I do want to read it, so let me know when it is available.

New 399 base photo: Let me know the cost. I'll pay at least half, and will pay all if I have the cash on hand. (It's an awkward way to make an offer, I know, but my budget soars and dips erratically). Anyway, count me in for half of the cost.

B99 missing metal: There is no point in guessing more about this since we shall have a definite answer when we get a new photo. I'll sit tight on guesses until then. Every new bit of material adds so much to our knowledge, and often in unexpected ways, so I look forward to seeing a new photo.

Z slides: You know what I have, so you can make up your mind whether to use my facilities. Understand, however, that the slides that I make from prints show no perceptible deterioration of quality in the thing photographed. What's nice, too, is that I can easily make blow-up slides from prints.

Newcomb had mentioned prearing sets of slides for distribution. That was months ago, and he has not mentioned it since. I'll ask him what he plans to do. If I can get slides made from his copy I would prefer that.

We had a thaw here and some rain that ruined the ice skating rink that I had built for my kids. Too bad; it was a dandy.

I have been easing my mind lately with something that I had not done for years. You may recall that about ten years ago I had considerable training in sculpture-- studied for five years in New York under a sculptor named Arthur Lee. Well, around Christmastime I started doing it again, without having touched a lump of clay in all that time. The results are marvelous. I made and cast into plaster a 3-foot relief of Michelangelo's "Adam" from the Cistine Chapel, and I'm well into the making of one of his athletes from the Chapel. When that is out of the way, I shall probably do more. I'll send you pictures when I get ~~XXX~~ them. With as much modesty as I can summon, I tell you that it is damned good work-- especially considering that I hadn't done anything like this for ten years. In time I may make busts of my kids, but presently reliefs are best, for I don't have much equipment or room to work. Reliefs are good too because I don't need a model for them as I would if I were doing figures in the round.

It's like finding ~~xxx~~ a dear lover that you haven't seen for oh so long; really nice. And I need it as therapy after digging through old books that nobody ever reads in order to find minuscule reference to people so obscure that I think maybe even their mothers didn't know about them. I bet you never heard of Erchanbert of Freising; and I bet his mother never heard of him either. But I have, and I wish that I hadn't.

Take care of yourself, and stay well.

Still,

Dick

cc Schoener

PS. I have not heard from Gary in a very long time, and I do not even know if he is getting the things I send him.